

Fort Lauderdale – Making the Grade!

The National League of Cities (NLC) selected Fort Lauderdale as one of six cities nationally to participate in a technical assistance program -- the "Municipal Leadership in Education" (MLE). Other participating cities are: New Haven, Connecticut; Lansing, Michigan; Portland, Oregon; Columbus, Ohio; and Charleston, South Carolina. The MLE is a 30-month program coordinated by the NLC's Institute for Youth, Education and Families (IYEF). The program's purpose is to develop and share "best practices" for how cities can work with local school districts and community organizations to improve public education.

The City of Fort Lauderdale project involves conducting a series of public information forums and training workshops this year and next. Residents, educators, school communities, civic associations, business groups and others are welcome to participate. The efforts will help citizens better understand the mechanics of the public education system, explore options for collaboration and build support networks for our City's schools and students.

The City is now recruiting volunteers to participate in an education visioning process. The visioning process will consist of 30 to 50 "Study Circles," comprised of 8 to 12 individuals, that will meet 5 times over a 6 to 8 week period to develop plans for informed public action to support education and school improvements. The small group efforts will be reviewed in a community forum to develop a consolidated, consensus plan.

To get these efforts underway, we are in need of volunteers to help as follows:

- **School, Neighborhood and Other Community-Based Organizers:** We have asked each of our neighborhood associations to designate someone to be the liaison and organizer for the MLE. Each of our 32 public schools have already designated someone to serve in this capacity. We invite other civic and business groups to consider hosting and organizing study circles as part of our project.
- **Study Circle Facilitators and Participants:** At a minimum, we want to pair our schools with their surrounding neighborhoods to operate one or more "Study Circles." We also want to establish other community-based circles. A study circle is a small group of 8-12 people, who engage in facilitated discussions and action planning. The City has chosen to use Study Circles as the method for developing a vision and plan of action to help students and schools achieve their full potential. Our Study Circles will meet 5 times on their own between October and the end of this year.
- **Orientation and Facilitators Training – November 2002:** Orientation and training sessions were conducted in September and October. Additional sessions are planned for mid-November. The participant orientation is a three-hour workshop. The training for facilitators is a day-long session that is usually scheduled on a Saturday.
- **MLE/Study Circle Sponsors:** We welcome the support of any business or organization interested in helping in the funding and administration of our project. One such sponsor, North Broward Hospital District, has donated in-kind services to print the MLE/Study Circles Discussion Guide. Other sponsors are needed to fund refreshments for discussion groups, to assist in the provision of informational and promotional items, etc. Please let us know if you are interested in becoming a project sponsor.

Below are websites for a number of agencies and organizations that will be helping us with our project. Additional collaborators are being identified all the time. Soon, other project information and links to a variety of education resources will be added to the City's website. As the project progresses, more information and updates will also be available online.

The National League of Cities and
The Institute for Youth, Education and Families
<http://www.nlc.org/>

The City of Fort Lauderdale
<http://info.ci.ftlaud.fl.us/>

Broward County Public Schools
<http://www.browardschools.com/index.htm>

Coordinating Council of Broward Co.
www.theccb.org

The Study Circles Resource Center
www.studyircles.org

Search Institute
<http://www.search-institute.org/>

Please Complete and Return The Attached Sign-Up Forms Right Away! Thank You.

Feel Free to Copy and Share with Others!

City of Fort Lauderdale Municipal Leadership in Education Program
Volunteer/Participant Sign-up Form

I am interested in participating in the City of Fort Lauderdale Municipal Leadership in Education project. Please contact me to provide more information.

I would like to participate in the following capacities:

- ☐ I can serve as a Neighborhood Organizer. Neighborhood: _____
- ☐ I can serve as a School Organizer. School: _____
- ☐ I would like to organize a Study Circle for the following organization:
Organization: _____
- ☐ I would like to be a Study Circles Facilitator.
- ☐ I would like to be a Study Circles Participant.
- ☐ I would like more information about the MLE program.

Study Circles Orientation and Facilitator Training Sessions

I will attend the following activities and events:

- ☐ I would like to attend a day-long Saturday Facilitators Training being held 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. on a Saturday in November to be announced.
- ☐ I would like to attend a Study Circles Orientation Session to be scheduled for upcoming weekday evenings in November.

Contact Information – Please Print Clearly

Name : _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Numbers: (Hm) _____ (Wk) _____ Other: _____

Email Address: _____

RETURN TO: Leslie G. Carhart
City Manager's Office, Fort Lauderdale City Hall
100 North Andrews Avenue, 7th Floor, Fort Lauderdale, FL, 33301
Fax: Attention Leslie G. Carhart (954) 828-5021 or (954) 762-8974
Contact Leslie at: (954) 828-8962 and/or LeslieC@ci.fort-lauderdale.fl.us